

Applic. No. 10/813,994
Art Unit: 2874**REMARKS*****Disposition of Claims***

Upon entry of the amendments herein, claims 1-7 will remain pending in the application and stand ready for further action on the merits. Independent claims 1 and 7 have been amended to clarify that the sealing feature includes a corrugated channel having a cross-sectional area that varies along the longitudinal direction of the channel. The channel includes varying wide and narrow sections. Each section of the channel includes a top width portion and depth portion that provide a cross-sectional area for that particular section. The cross-sectional area of each wide section is greater than the cross-sectional area of each narrow section. Dependent claim 6 has been further amended so that the term "said cross-sectional area" now has sufficient antecedent basis. Each of these amendments is fully supported by the specification, particularly at page 21, lines 14-20; page 23, lines 15-30; page 24, lines 8-24, and FIGS. 11, 12, 13A, 13B, 13C, and 14. No new matter has been added to the application. Claims 2-6 are dependent on amended claim 1.

Objections to the Specification

The Office Action objects to the Abstract of the Disclosure, because the Abstract does not describe the sealing feature that is being claimed in the current application. A replacement Abstract, which describes the sealing feature, is presented above. In view of this replacement Abstract, it is respectfully requested that the objection to the Abstract of the Disclosure be withdrawn.

The Specification has been further amended at page 23, line 22 to correct a typographical error. Particularly, the language, "line 1313-1313" in the Specification has been deleted and the language --- line 13B-line 13B --- has been substituted in place thereof. No new matter has been added to the application.

Claim Objections

The Office Action objects to claim 6 because it contains the term, "said cross-sectional area" and this term lacks antecedent basis. As set forth above, claim 6 has been amended herein to clarify that "said cross-sectional area" refers to the cross-sectional area

Applic. No. 10/813,994
Art Unit: 2874

of the corrugated channel. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this objection to claim 6 be withdrawn.

Rejection of Claims 1-7 Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

The Office Action rejects claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Milanowski et al., U.S. Patent 6,201,922 ("Milanowski"). It is respectfully submitted that the present invention, as recited in amended claims 1-7, is not anticipated by Milanowski for the reasons discussed below.

As presented above, claims 1-7 have been amended to recite that the sealing feature includes a corrugated channel having a cross-sectional area that varies along the longitudinal direction of the channel. The channel includes wide and narrow sections. Each section of the channel includes a top width portion and a depth portion that provide a cross-sectional area for that particular section. The cross-sectional area of each wide section is greater than the cross-sectional area of each narrow section.

Turning to Milanowski, this reference generally discloses an equipment box for electrical and optical cables. The equipment box (1) includes a hollow body (6) and a lid (7). A linear gasket (8) is included in a peripheral groove (9) in the hollow body (6) of the box. The lid (7) includes a rib (26). When the lid (7) closes over the body (6), the rib presses against the gasket (8) to seal the box. The assembly further includes a neck gasket (18) with a projecting element (20) having a groove (24). The neck gasket (18) is inserted so that the groove (24) slides into a slot located between two ends of the groove (9). This provides a continuous abutment path for the groove (9).

As the Examiner points out, in FIGS. 5 and 6 of Milanowski, different embodiments of the groove (24) are shown. In one embodiment, a rib (25) is provided on the bottom of the groove (24) (FIG. 5 and col. 6, lines 18-25). In a second embodiment, the top portion of the groove (24) is relatively wide and the bottom portion is relatively narrow and pointed so that the groove has a V-shaped cross-section (FIG. 6 and col. 6, lines 26-35). Thus, the groove (24) has a cross-sectional area that varies along its depth.

But, Milanowski does not teach a sealing feature including a channel having a cross-sectional area that varies along the longitudinal direction of the channel as presently claimed.

Applic. No. 10/813,994
Art Unit: 2874

Referring to FIGS. 13A, 13B, and 13C in the subject application, Applicants' corrugated channel (131) includes wide sections (143) and narrow sections (141). Each wide and narrow section includes a top portion having a width (144) and a depth portion (153). As described at page 23, lines 24-29 of the specification, the dimensions of the top width (144) and depth (153) provide each respective section with a particular cross-sectional area, and the cross-sectional area of a wide section is greater than the cross-sectional area of a narrow section.

Conversely, the width of the top portion and depth of the groove (24) as described by Milanowski remains constant. In Milanowski, the cross-sectional area of the groove (24) may have the shape shown in FIG. 5 or the V-shape shown in FIG. 6. Thus, the cross-sectional area of the groove (24) may vary along the depth or height of the groove (24), but the cross-sectional area of the groove (24) does not vary along the length of the groove (24).

It is respectfully submitted that Milanowski does not disclose each and every element of the presently claimed sealing feature as required by an anticipatory reference. In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 1-7 (as amended) under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) in view of Milanowski be withdrawn.

The Office Action further rejects claims 1, 2, 6, and 7 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) in view of Palmer, U.S. Patent 5,495,364 ("Palmer"). Palmer is directed to a night vision binocular assembly having a waterproof housing that encases certain optoelectronic components. As the Examiner points out, in FIGS. 3A and 3B, Palmer shows the waterproof housing (16) including an upper half section (18) and a lower half section (20). The upper section (18) includes a projection (46) and the lower section (20) includes a groove (50). The projection and groove contain an adhesive so that when the upper and lower sections are joined together, a waterproof seal is created.

The objective in Palmer is to seal the sections of the housing without using a gasket. Thus, a projection/groove sealing mechanism with an adhesive is used. But, the Examiner asserts that the groove (50) shown in Palmer has a varying cross-sectional area and is capable of receiving a gasket having a constant cross-area.

Applic. No. 10/813,994
Art Unit: 2874

Claims 1, 2, 6, and 7 have been amended, as discussed above, to clarify that Applicants' channel has a cross-sectional area that varies along its longitudinal direction. The channel includes varying wide and narrow sections along its length, and the cross-sectional areas of the wide sections are greater than the cross-sectional areas of the narrow sections.

Applicants submit that Palmer does not disclose or suggest a groove having a cross-sectional area that varies along the longitudinal direction of the groove as presently claimed. In Palmer, the groove (50) extends along the edges of the housing to seal the upper and lower sections (18, 20), but the cross-sectional area of the groove (50) does not vary along its length.

It is respectfully submitted that Palmer does not disclose each and every element of the presently claimed sealing feature as required by an anticipatory reference. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 1, 2, 6, and 7 (as amended) under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) in view of Palmer be withdrawn....

Conclusion

In summary, Applicant submits that all of the claims presented for consideration herein are patentable and each of the Examiner's rejections and objections has been overcome. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests favorable consideration and allowance of claims 1-7 (as amended).

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fee required in connection with the filing of this paper or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account 02-0900.

Applic. No. 10/813,994
Art Unit: 2874

Should there be any outstanding matter that needs to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,
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